



## Gitmo Continuity

White House sources say that various legal advisers inside and outside of government are now saying they see little upside to closing down the Guantanamo terrorist holding facility, and that it will be difficult for the Obama administration to close the facility down as promised to Democratic and leftist supporters.



"This is one of those situations where candidate Obama's rhetoric cannot match the reality," says an outside legal adviser to the administration. "They're going to look at any option they can, but I don't see any way we close it down, not if we don't want it to come back to hurt us politically down the road."

Complicating matters is U.S. allies' refusal to take on a larger number of detainees to be held in their own facilities. Rumors continue to persist that White House counsel **Gregory Craig**, who was brought into the administration to develop the legal and policy foundation to close Guantanamo, will be removed from the post, in part due to his failure to move the Guantanamo issue further than he has.

## Sensitivity Challenged

In attempting to decide on possible dates for President **Barack Obama** to announce his plans for future U.S. engagement in Afghanistan, several options were under consideration, according to a White House source. (At press time, Obama had not yet made a decision on a military plan for Afghanistan, even though Pentagon recommendations had been on his desk since August.)

One of the dates was Wednesday, November 11, which happened to be Veterans Day. After further research determined that the date was in fact Veterans Day, November 11 was removed from consideration.

Making such an announcement on an inappropriate day would not have been the first time for the Obama administration. In September, Obama chose the anniversary of Stalinist Russia's invasion of Poland in 1939 to announce that he was abandoning the plan agreed to by the U.S., Poland, and the Czech Republic to deploy a missile shield in those countries.

Since the latest fiasco, all announcement dates are being reviewed internally by White House staff.

## Fat City Bloat

One little-noticed byproduct of President Obama's trillion-dollar stimulus bill from January 2009: the fact that tens of millions of dollars are being spent by federal agencies to hire consultants to advise them on how best to spend the stimulus dollars. Not only are

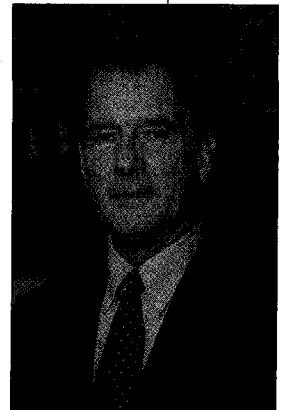
firms like management consultants McKinsey & Co. collecting on the stimulus package, but lobbyists with ties to the administration, and who have been barred from working for Obama, are also said to be collecting on the deal.

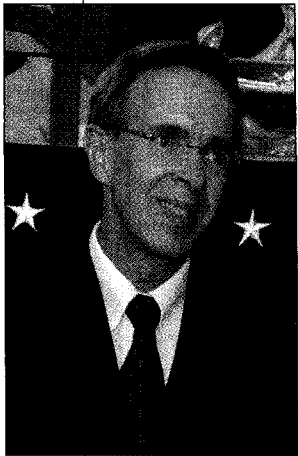
According to a source in the Department of Energy, the agency has signed a number of consulting firms to fat, multi-million dollar contracts to provide the agency with advice on how to identify private firms that would qualify for stimulus funds, and then show those firms how to apply. "There are so many rules on these funds, a lot of companies are afraid to apply for them, so the consultants help both us and the private companies. We have to get the money out the door," says one DOE staffer.

Similar consulting deals have been signed at the Department of Commerce, the Department of Education and the Department of Labor, according to another Obama administration source.

## Post-Scozzafava

Now that the special election in the 23rd Congressional District of New York has been settled, with conservatives preventing a liberal Republican from winning the seat, and Democrat **Bill Owens** emerging the winner, Republicans are picking through rubble and evaluating how a Lake Placid





accountant, **Doug Hoffman**, a Conservative Party neophyte, was able to turn the GOP establishment on its ear.

"Heads are going to roll at some point, it's just a matter of where and how many," says a

Washington-based Republican political consultant.

The key issue: how **Dede Scozzafava**, a liberal Republican, who in the past had run on the Working Families Party line (a party with ties to New York's ACORN organization), was selected by local Republican Party officials to run for a seat in a district that had in the past elected moderate to conservative Republican representation.

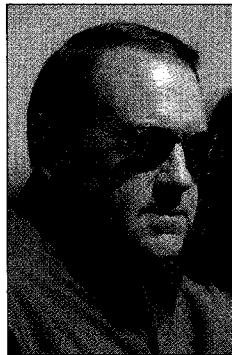
**John McHugh**, who held the seat before being named Army Secretary by President Barack Obama, "was your traditional northeastern Republican," says a Republi-

can congressman. "Scozzafava was nowhere close to being what I guess you'd call a 'McHugh Republican.' How she got this is something a number of us are interested in finding out, because we were forced, if not to support her, at least to give her cover."

Many lay the blame for Scozzafava at the lap of former Rep. **Tom Reynolds**, who ran the National Republican Congressional Com-

mittee as a member of the House in the 2006 election cycle. A number of staffers on the NRCC remain loyal to his approach, and Reynolds, who represented New York's 26th Congressional District, himself knows many of the political operatives in the region.

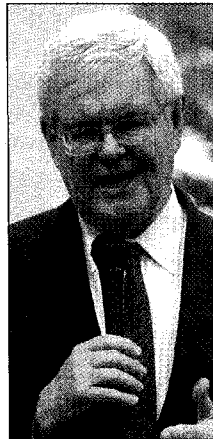
Also under the microscope: Republican presidential hopefuls who despite touting their conservative credentials chose not to



support Hoffman even though he was the clear conservative candidate in the race. Former Arkansas Gov. **Mike Huckabee**,

former Massachusetts Gov. **Mitt Romney**, and former House Speaker **Newt Gingrich** all declined to endorse Hoffman and their leadership political action committees did not to provide financial support to his campaign.

Huckabee, who collected a \$38,000 speaking fee from the Conservative Party in a neighboring upstate New York district just a week before the special election, has told associates that Huck PAC did not support Hoffman because Hoffman had previously been endorsed by the Club for Growth, which spent heavily to ensure Huckabee did not win the Republican nomination in 2008. ❧



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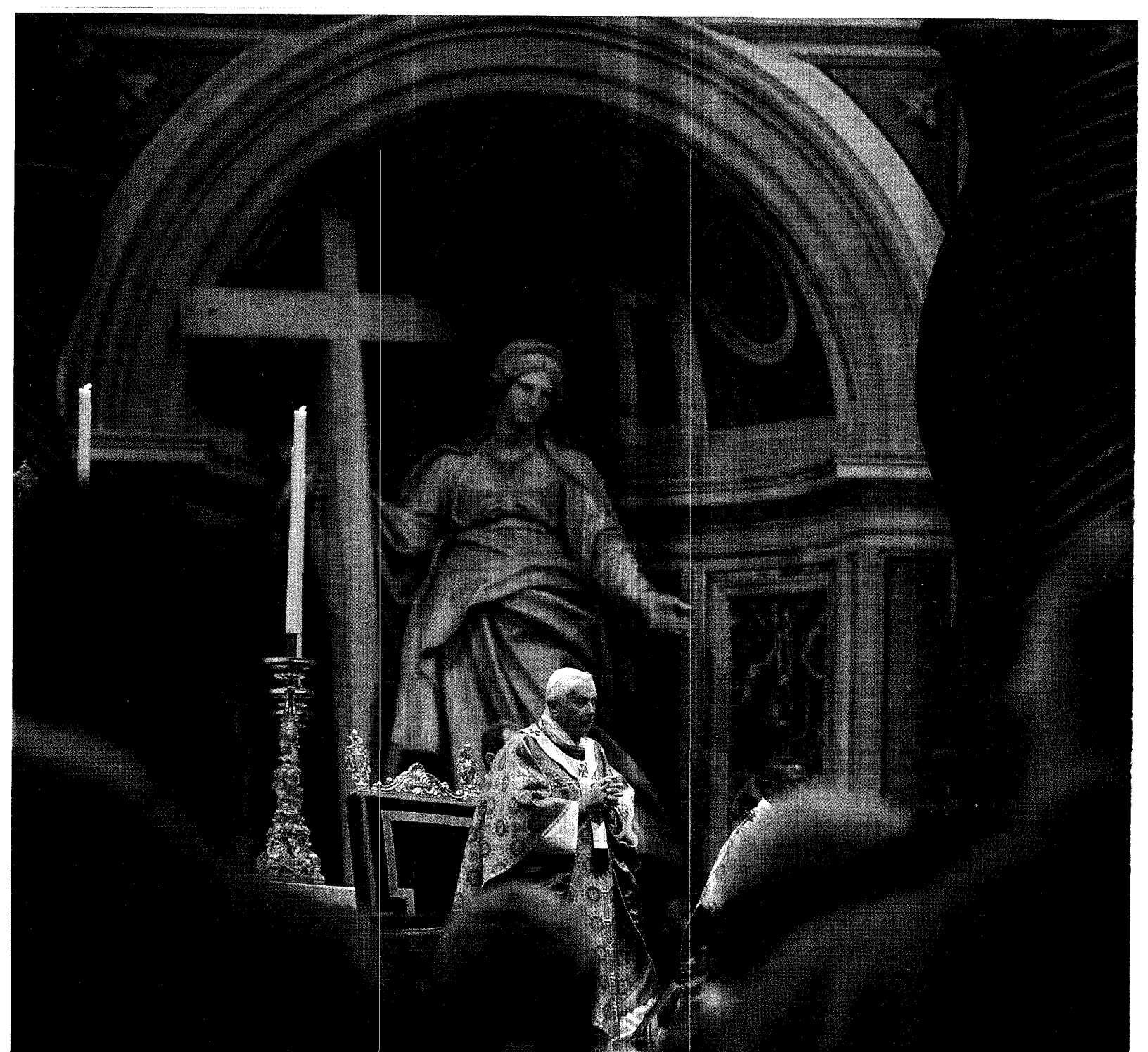
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# The Great Consolidator

Benedict XVI is finding ways to allow all roads to lead to Rome again.

**By Jeremy Lott**